

NOT RELEASED

The Governor is not likely to force taxpayers to give another \$20 million of their money to a private foundation that already has received \$100 million and has yet to account for it. As it stands now, the Partnership has given hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Legislative Black Caucus and other groups with no public accountability. At the very least, there must be public accountability of taxpayer money.

Just think, if this \$20 million was designated for Medicaid, the federal government would match it 3-to-1, which would provide close to \$80 million for health care in Mississippi.

Today, the Speaker ramrodded House Bill 1115 to passage by ruling that a donation to this charitable organization is not a donation, gaveling down attempts to amend the bill and crushing debate. It was an unfortunate exercise.

The state cannot afford to just throw \$20 million of public money into the private Partnership every year in perpetuity without a very serious evaluation of how the money can best be used. At the very least, the Partnership's programs should work in conjunction and coordination with the public health mission of other state agencies and the Partnership should be subject to the same types of audits as others that receive taxpayer money.

We can only hope that the glaring deficiencies in House Bill 1115 can be corrected when it is considered in the Senate.